



## **Middletown Township Public Schools**

### **Middle School English Language Arts Guidelines for Parents**

#### **2016-2017**

### **MODEL OF INSTRUCTION**

Student learning is based on a *balanced literacy model* of instruction and includes skill based lessons in reading, writing, word study and speaking & listening. Students are engaged in both direct and indirect instruction in whole group and small group settings. Classroom libraries and literacy centers provide opportunities for shared and individual learning experiences and help students develop a deep appreciation for quality literature. Teachers scaffold instruction to align with the needs of individual students to support growth, independence and achievement in reading and writing. Thematic novels, authentic literature and quality nonfiction/informational text are embedded throughout the curriculum with a core emphasis on making interdisciplinary connections and drawing evidence from text. Teachers and students work with a wide variety of materials including but not limited to resources from Teacher's College Reading and Writing Project's Units of Study for writing and other materials that support reading and the Writing Workshop.

### **READING**

Reading instruction follows a workshop model and usually begins with a 10-15 minute mini-lesson that allows the teacher to model a specific targeted skill or strategy. Teachers will often use authentic literature to demonstrate the strategy that will be the focus of the lesson. Students will work with a balance of literature and informational text. Following the whole group instruction, students move into **small groups** for instruction tailored to meet their individual needs.

### **READING ASSESSMENT**

Beginning this fall All students will be assessed using the [\*iReady Diagnostic Reading Assessment from Curriculum Associates\*](#). This is an adaptive diagnostic assessment that provides a customized evaluation to assist teachers in identifying areas of need and students Lexile reading levels. This will measure student growth throughout the school year and allow teachers to differentiate instruction based on the data provided.

### **VOCABULARY AND GRAMMAR**

Vocabulary instruction is both explicit and implicit. Teachers provide students with terms and definitions that are appropriate to grade and reading level. Vocabulary is one of five core components of reading instruction that are essential to successfully teach students to read. In Middletown, vocabulary and grammar are integral components of the balanced literacy approach and instruction in these areas is prescriptive in nature and aligned to the CCSS. Our middle school teachers develop their vocabulary instruction to meet students' needs through various means such as but not limited to the following:

- Grammar/vocabulary addressed during writing workshop based on student needs, either through mini lesson, small group or individual conferences
- Vocabulary can be addressed during the reading block through a multi-component approach

## WRITING

Our district has fully implemented writing aligned to the *Teachers College Reading & Writing Project*. Our writing instruction allows teachers to guide students to become young authors. Teachers coach students and encourage them to take ownership of their writing. Spelling, grammar and punctuation instruction is embedded in each student's writing. Students focus on the authentic and ongoing *process* of writing instead of a *written product*. When students write, they are encouraged to build upon what they know and make connections to the world around them.

- Students will complete *On Demand Writing Prompts* that will guide instruction and allow teachers and students to develop personal writing goals. Additional *On Demand Prompts* will allow teachers to measure each student's growth as a writer and facilitate a focus on the *writer* rather than *the writing*.
- The Writing Workshop model of process writing instruction begins with a brief mini-lesson during which the teacher models an explicit writing skill often using mentor text to exemplify how real authors write. Following the mini-lesson students participate in guided practice of the skill modeled in the mini-lesson. Students work individually, with partners, or in small groups as the teacher moves about the room conferencing with students to refine their writing. Students move along a continuum as they revise, edit, share, publish and celebrate each piece of writing. In accordance with the Common Core State Standards students are required to support their writing with text-based evidence. They will need to draw on background/foundational knowledge and include analysis of informational text in their writing.

## PARCC Assessment

**Please note there will be only *one* testing window for PARCC this year.**

**Grades 6-8: March 27, 2017–May 19, 2017**

This includes make-up dates. Please know that the exact dates for **Middle School PARCC** assessments within this window will be determined at the District level.

## WEBSITES

- For more information on the ELA COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS INITIATIVE (CCSS)  
<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy>
- For more information on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)  
<http://www.parcconline.org/>